

K *Stewart (R) Marquis of Londonderry*
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R E P O R T

OF TWO

S P E E C H E S.

DELIVERED BY THE

RT. HON. LORD VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH,

IN THE DEBATE ON THE

R E G E N C Y B I L L,

ON APRIL 11th, 1799.

Dublin.

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1799.

ADVERTISEMENT

— TWO —

SUPPLEMENT

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by Lord Villiers in the debate
on the Regency Bill would, before this, have
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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

THURSDAY APRIL 11th, 1799.

REGENCY BILL.

THE Order for the House going into Committee on the Regency Bill being read,

Lord CASTLEREAGH rose. His Lordship said, that when this Bill had been originally proposed by the Right Hon. Member who introduced it, he had declared his intention not to oppose the measure, provided it strictly followed the principle of the Act of Annexation, and if it remedied all the evils, which the principles adopted by the House in 1789 had produced. On the second reading of the Bill he had stated several of the inconveniencies which arose from our present situation, which would not only be continued, but

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increased

increased by any inadequate measure on the subject. He was now obliged to say, that if the bill was to be passed in its present form, the inconveniences and evils which he had enumerated would by no means be obviated, and that he therefore could not accept it as a cure for the evil it was intended to remedy. On arguing the present Bill he thought he should not do himself justice, were he to confine himself strictly within the limits of its provisions: he would therefore advert, not merely to the precise object of the bill before the house, but would resort to the principle from which it flowed; *that* principle was the danger which arose, and must for ever arise, from the possibility of two independent legislatures in the same empire adopting discordant measures on imperial questions. The Right Hon. Gentleman had adverted to one of the effects which resulted from this principle, but had totally neglected the cause; it was his duty rather to apply to the cause, which was the source of numerous inconveniences, which could alone be cured by its removal. The bill merely took up a single point out of many which flowed from that *cause*; he would not enumerate them all; however they were all points of division and separation. But no man could overlook the danger which resulted from two independent

pendent legislatures in the great questions of peace, of war, of general trade and commerce, and of treaties with foreign nations, not to mention the difficulties which arose from the admiralty jurisdiction, and the great subject of our religious establishment, which must be regulated on imperial principles. As to the first of these questions, (the question of Peace and War) what was not to be apprehended on the subject, under our state of separate legislatures? How was it possible to conceive that the empire could continue as at present, whilst all parts of it were to receive equal protection, and only one part of it to suffer the burdens of that protection? Must we not, of necessity and in justice, look to some settlement of imperial contribution? And so soon as a system of contribution should be established, was there any question as to peace and war, which would not agitate every part of the country? And should we not be bound to consider with scrupulousness every imperial measure which might lead to the demand of contributions from the people? If the question of peace and war was important at present, how much more interesting would it become then! The subject would assume a new aspect, every circumstance of continental politics must be matter of our solicitude and come within our discussion.

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Why had we not differed from Great Britain in former wars? It was from this circumstance, that Great Britain supported the whole expence, and wars were not in any degree expensive to Ireland. Wars have recently increased in their expence enormously. Ireland as a separate country, possessing all the advantages of the commerce and all the advantages of the protection of England, will naturally be bound to contribute her just proportion for the continuance of those advantages. When that shall be the case, how can it be expected that she will tamely follow Great Britain with that submission and subserviency which has hitherto marked her conduct? If parliament were to consent to such humiliation, would they carry with them the public confidence? The feelings of the people must always be agitated in proportion to their interests; they would not easily be reconciled to have their contributions called forth to support measures which their representatives did not discuss, nor would they suffer without jealousy questions which affected their dearest interests to be decided in a parliament in which they were not represented. What then is the security for the connexion of the two kingdoms? Is it the discretion of the Irish Parliament? No man had a higher respect than himself for their prudence, their liberality and their loyalty.

loyalty. But had not that discretion already failed in so remarkable an instance, as to prove that it was at best but a bad security? It was against the principle of human nature that one country should voluntarily and regularly follow the dictates of another; it was against the common principles of pride and independence, which must ever grow and increase with the importance of the kingdom. In proportion therefore to our wealth and strength, the principle of discretion would be weakened, and the sole security for the continuance of our connexion would vanish. His Lordship after these general observations reverted to the bill before the house: He said the bill certainly went to enact that the regal power of the two kingdoms should reside in the same person: But how did it secure that end? The Crown had at present an undoubted prerogative of appointing a regency in certain cases; whereas the bill, as it was framed, entirely destroyed that prerogative. The bill was also so drawn, that if it passed in its present form, the regent of Great Britain could not appoint a Lord Lieutenant, for the regent would be merely a deputy, and no deputy could appoint a deputy. If such was the objection to the frame, there were greater objections to the substance, of the bill. If it were
complete

complete as to the *person* who should be regent ; it did not define his *power*, which might be of equal consequence. The competency and propriety of parliament limiting the powers of the regent had been fully established in the British parliament. But how was that principle applied in the bill ? The proviso enacted that the regent of Ireland should be subject to the same restrictions as the regent of England. Here the right hon. gentleman gave up the supremacy of the Irish legislature, and transferred to the parliament of England the right of imposing restrictions on the regent of Ireland, but he gave up this right in the most absurd manner imaginable. He gives the parliament of Great Britain a right to form restrictions for our regent, but does not allow them to consider the applicability of those restrictions ; he makes the restrictions imposed on the regent of Great Britain attach, right or wrong, on the regent of Ireland ; and forgetting that what is expedient in one country may be inexpedient in another, he makes the same regulations fortuitously attach to different governments, differently constituted and differently circumstanced. Certainly the question of restrictions cannot be avoided ; but by whom are they to be imposed ? There were only three methods ; first by the parliament of Great Britain ; second by the parliament of Ireland ; third, by treaty.

ty. If the last were to be resorted to, he feared the effort would be vain and futile; and as in the case of the commercial propositions, the question of policy would be sacrificed to the difficulty of settling the question of authority. If the power were to be given to the parliament of Great Britain, he then fully admitted that such a provision would meet the difficulties of the case, but this could not be accomplished without a surrender of the supremacy of the Irish Parliament. But if the restrictions were to be imposed by the Irish parliament, in that case nothing was done, the question would be still afloat, would be open to every possible cavil, and subject as much as ever to the influence of faction and cabal. His Lordship proceeded to say, that our connexion with England chiefly depended on the prerogatives of the crown of both kingdoms being exercised under the controul of one imperial cabinet. He would then suppose a case, which was easy to be imagined and natural to occur, that the English parliament should delegate the royal authority to a person of whose principles and councils the Irish parliament was jealous. Ireland would be bound to adopt this individual as their regent. Although the nomination of the person was by this bill placed out of their power, the right of restraining his authority would be in their power. How would the Irish parliament naturally proceed

to restrain him? might they not require that his prerogatives should be exercised by the advice and under the controul of an Irish council responsible to the Irish parliament alone? A Lord Lieutenant is now controuled by the British crown, and the British cabinet; he would be then controuled by an Irish cabinet; and instead of one general executive for the whole empire, we should have two executives, as well as two legislatures; and be subjected to the effects which must unavoidably result from distinct governments. His lordship then argued, that the only mode of settling the question was by distinctly surrendering to the British parliament the whole authority on this point. And if the right hon. gentleman was prepared to follow up the Act of Annexation, and to enact, that the power which created the crown of Ireland and limited its succession, should be competent to regulate the question of regency in all cases, he would then set the question at rest; if he stopped short of *that*, he would be doing nothing. His lordship asked, whence did the difficulty on this and similar questions arise? Was it not from the final settlement, as it was called, of 1782? Antecedent to that period, the parliament of this kingdom was in the habit of submitting to the parliament of another country, and *that* parliament was allowed a general superintendence

intendence in all cases of imperial legislation. Since that period, the parliament of Ireland would not suffer any other authority to interfere in the concerns of this kingdom, and hence all the inconveniences and dangers had arisen which he had stated. He was however surprised, that any man should call the measure of 1782 a final adjustment between the countries, which went but to one principle, and set afloat every other. He called the house to look at the weakness of the measure itself, which from every subsequent event to the present day, had shewn itself to be entirely inadequate to adjust the questions which disturbed the empire; he called on the house to look to the resolutions of the British parliament, which declared *that* settlement not to be final; and he called on them to advert to the expressions of those ministers who had framed that settlement. His lordship here stated Mr. Fox's sentiments from his speech on the commercial propositions in 1785, as follows:

“ JULY 22, 1785.

“ Mr. Fox, (speaking of the settlement of 1782,)
 “ declared, that no idea of a commercial regulation
 “ had been entertained by administration of that day,
 “ in proposing that resolution. There were, he said,
 “ at that time certainly some regulations wanting be-

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“ tween

“tween the two countries, but those regulations
 “were to extend to political objects alone, and not to
 “commercial; they went partly to establish what
 “was much wanted, something to replace that
 “power, which, in their struggles for independence,
 “the Irish had imprudently insisted on having abo-
 “lished; and which he had himself given up, in
 “compliance with the strong current of the preju-
 “dices of that nation, though with a reluctance
 “that nothing but irresistible necessity could have
 “overcome. The power which he wished to have
 “seen replaced, was that which had been so often
 “of late under discussion in parliament, and which
 “had been variously termed, being sometimes
 “called commercial, at other times external, and
 “frequently imperial legislation, that power being
 “precipitately abolished, that some succedaneum
 “should be found for it; for without one general
 “and superintending authority to embrace and
 “comprehend the whole system of the navigation of
 “the empire, it must necessarily happen that much
 “confusion and great inconvenience would take
 “place.”

“When he had said, that he had regretted hav-
 “ing given it the power of external legislation, as
 “likely

"likely to prejudice the general interests of the em-
 "pire, and therefore necessary to be replaced, he
 "desired not to be understood as meaning to seek for
 "it again ; what he meant was, to find some system,
 "that without reclaiming the power, or infringing
 "in the smallest degree on the full emancipation and
 "independence formally conceded to Ireland,
 "should afford the means of avoiding that confu-
 "sion which was otherwise so much to be
 "dreaded."

His Lordship said he did not argue from these
 words however strong and impressive, that Mr.
 Fox had a legislative union in contemplation in
 1782, but he evidently wanted some permanent
 principle of connexion as a substitute for what he
 had surrendered. Mr. Fox was probably not able at
 that period to look a legislative union in the face ;
 he was obliged to go in search of some measure
 of corresponding force, if it could be found, but
 he searched in vain. It was ridiculous to consider
 the settlement of 1782 as final, because it was so
 stated in the Address of the time ; we must judge
 of a measure from its spirit, not from its words ;
 from its principles and effects, not from the lan-
 guage in which it may be cloathed ; and from the

known and declared intention of its framers, not from the mere phrase in which it may happen to be expressed. His Lordship then concluded that there was no alternative but to remain subject to the present evil, or to embrace the whole remedy. Let not gentlemen flatter themselves that by applying half-measures the danger of separation could be cured; the principles of the bill of annexation might bear us out in surrendering our legislative independence to Great Britain in the case of a Regency; but the spirit of the country would not bear it in others. Such a conduct was full of delicacy, and it was big with danger; it involved the principle of intrusting power without representation, a principle which had produced the loss of America, and was incompatible with the British Constitution. He would therefore acquiesce in the Right Hon. Gentleman's bill, if made adequate and effectual; but he should be criminal if he were to blindfold the people on the subject, by submitting to half-measures; and as in the whole it was but a feeble attempt to cure a general evil by a partial remedy, he did not think it his duty to make himself responsible for its effects, although he might not oppose it. If it should be made adequate to its object

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in the committee, he would not afterwards resist it ;
if it should remain inadequate, he would not disgrace himself by supporting it.

The Right Honourable the Speaker having in the Committee delivered the Speech, which has been since published,

Lord CASTLEREAGH rose in reply. His Lordship said, that he had been highly gratified by the opportunity which had been offered to the Right Hon. Gentleman to state at large his sentiments upon the question of UNION; that he had no doubt if an opportunity had presented itself, he would have availed himself of his privilege at an earlier period; and certainly the Right Hon. Gentleman, in entering so much at large into the subject, had merely done credit to himself, to the situation which he filled, and the opposition which he had professed. He felt the utmost diffidence in replying to the speech of the Right Hon. Gentleman, as he fully acknowledged the great superiority of his experience and abilities; and he lamented that it

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was impossible for him to enter into all the numerous topics and details, which his power of condensation had enabled him to compress together. He should be happy, however, could he at any time be enabled to consider and meet them article by article: for he felt that every thing which he had advanced was so capable of refutation, that the result of what he heard was to impress upon his mind more strongly than ever, that the existence of this country depended upon a Legislative Union with Great Britain. He would first advert to the insinuation made by the Speaker, that he had declared that private opinions were more to be relied upon than records of Parliament. This was not his argument; he had stated that parliamentary documents were to be explained according to their spirit, tendency and effect, more than according to their words; and that the best testimony, as to the intent and meaning of a measure, was the declaration of the Ministers who framed it. It was on this principle he had quoted the speech of Mr. Fox. The Speaker could not pretend to insinuate that Mr. Fox was not Minister in 1782, much less could he insinuate that he did not know his own intentions at that period. As to the settlement of 1782, so much contended to be final, he had stated it himself to be so, as to the points of grievance then brought

brought forward ;—It was undoubtedly final, as to the subserviency of the Irish to the British Legislature ; but as to all other questions of intercourse, of policy, of reciprocal benefit and advantage between the two kingdoms it could not be final ; it was not so in its nature, it had been proved not to be so from its consequences, and it was the height of absurdity to argue that it was. Does the Right Hon. Gentleman think that the two separate legislatures can keep the countries connected by the mere principle of their independency ; or that in itself and in its nature the principle of independency is a measure of connexion ? No, Sir, the two kingdoms are at present kept together by the feelings of the people, and not by the adjustment of 1782, which is totally inadequate. But the Right Hon. Gentleman relies on the great Seal of England.—Will the great Seal keep down the jealousy of the people of Ireland ? Will the great Seal destroy French principles ? Will the great Seal destroy that separation and distinctness of interests upon which the enemies of the empire erect their hopes of dividing the islands ? But it was said this settlement of 1782 had kept the country in peace until its tranquillity was disturbed by Mr. Pitt's rashness in introducing the question of an Union. He appealed to the House if that was a fair and candid

did statement of the case?—was that a statement which became the Right Hon. Gentleman? He wished not to exaggerate the distresses of the country: he wished not to expatiate on the distractions by which she was convulsed; it was not a state of peace, it was not a state of tranquillity which Mr. Pitt had endeavoured to disturb, but it was the state of our miseries and distractions to which Mr. Pitt was ready to sacrifice his own peace, in the hope of finding a remedy. But when the Right Hon. Gentleman accuses Mr. Pitt's rashness as the cause of the disturbances of Ireland, what was his own conduct? Was that calculated to allay the heats, and cool the animosities of the country? or did not he and his friends exert themselves in inflaming the minds of the people? When the question of Union was first mentioned, did not he use all his influence to prevent its being discussed at all, as a question not to be admitted? and when the Government consented not to press the subject, but to leave it till the temper of Parliament should change, did not he and his friends press for immediate discussion, in order to keep up the flame they had created? The Right Hon. Gentleman had complained of the language used in another house by Mr. Pitt, and of his own speech being garbled by order of Government; what was the truth on the latter point?

point? So soon as Mr. Pitt's speech was supposed to have arrived, there was a natural curiosity in the public to read it; he therefore had sent a friend with the first copy he had received to a printer, to which copy a curtailed report of the Speaker's speech in 1785 was annexed. As soon as he heard that this speech was not a just statement, he desired *that* statement to be substituted, which the Speaker himself should approve; and it was done accordingly. As to Mr. Pitt's taking advantage of the Speaker's opinion in 1785, was it not acknowledged that the opinions of great men on great subjects, when truly quoted, have great weight and may be fairly adduced? and was there one point in which Mr. Pitt had misrepresented him? But if this conduct was not candid in Mr. Pitt, did not the Speaker himself commence the attack?—What were the insinuations in his answer to the freeholders of Louth? Did he not state that the settlement in 1782 was a final settlement on all constitutional questions, and did he not then insinuate that Mr. Pitt in proposing an Union was breaking that settlement, was infringing a compact, and violating the faith of Great Britain, solemnly pledged to Ireland? and would not Mr. Pitt have been deficient in his duty to himself and the public, if he had not vindicated his conduct from so foul an aspersions? and had not Mr. Pitt a

right to defend himself if possible by the authority of his accuser, and to resent the accusation? Did Mr. Pitt in his defence quote the Right Hon. Gentleman untruly, or did he make any uncandid inference from his speeches? He quoted the Right Hon. Gentleman to have said, " Things cannot remain as they are, commercial jealousy is roused, it will increase with two independent legislatures, and without one united interest in commerce in a commercial empire, political Union will receive many shocks; and separation of interest will occasion separation of connexion, which every honest Irishman must shudder to look at as possible."

Did Mr. Pitt argue from this passage that the Speaker was an advocate for a Legislative Union? No, but he shewed from it that the Speaker confessed that danger was to be apprehended from the collision of separate legislatures, which in their very nature were vehicles of jealousy and instruments of separation. Mr. Pitt quoted the passage he stated from the Right Hon. Gentleman's speech on the Commercial Propositions, which were considered by him as fraught with the greatest possible advantages for Ireland. That measure however failed; and what was it that produced its failure? Jealousy, not of a commercial but political nature: it failed because

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because an high-minded nation like ours will be more roused by questions of political authority, than commercial advantage. But had not the Speaker made a further attack on Mr. Pitt? in his answer to the resolutions of the county of Louth, had he not stated that, "The surrender of our separate legislature would destroy the security of our trade, and render our advantages precarious; that our commerce could not be benefited but, might decrease, by an Union?" Was not then Mr. Pitt called upon to disprove these assertions by the Speaker's words in 1785, viz. that "*without an united interest in commerce political Union would receive many shocks;*" and to show from these words that the British minister was called upon to insure that connexion on which the advantages of Ireland depended: and which (Ireland having declined a compact) could only be secured by an Union? When also the Speaker had stated that the linen trade depended solely on the bounties and protection of the Irish Parliament, had not Mr. Pitt a right to prove that the prosperity of this trade depends not on the Irish bounties, but on the bounties and duties imposed by the British Parliament? Let it here be recollected that Mr. Pitt was merely repelling an attack, and that the Right Hon. Gentleman had struck the first blow. But how did the Rt. Hon. Gentleman mistake Mr. Pitt in talking of

the principle of contribution, and how had he misrepresented Mr. Pitt? He stated that Mr. Pitt's sole object was to lay his hands upon the purse of Ireland, whereas the resolutions produced by Mr. Pitt prove diametrically the reverse! But does the Right Hon. Gentleman contend that we are not to pursue a liberal system towards Great Britain? Does he mean to argue that the expence of Imperial protection is to fall on the shoulders of one member of the empire alone, and that the other is to take no share of the burden? Is that the Hon. Gentleman's argument? Is that the principle of connexion which he means to establish? I stated Sir, that if the present principles of connexion remain, they must be followed up by contribution; I shewed the danger to the connexion under that circumstance; and in order to get rid of my argument, it must be contended that Ireland must ever remain separate, must ever be protected by England, and must never contribute to the empire at all. How has the Right Hon. Gentleman misrepresented Mr. Pitt, by stating that he menaced this country with hostility, if we did not embrace an Union; when the whole tendency of Mr. Pitt's speech is to shew, that an Union by force would be ruinous, and that it can only be founded on the inclinations of the people? The statement of Mr. Pitt, which has been stated as a menace,

menace, was necessarily brought forward to obviate the assertions of the Hon. Gentleman, that our trade was owing solely to the independence of the Irish Parliament. If Mr. Pitt has shewn that the trade, and particularly the linen trade depended not on the Irish but the British Legislature, he was forced into the proof by the Right Hon. Gentleman.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had entered at length into a laborious detail upon the commerce of Ireland, and he certainly acknowledged his superiority on such subjects; at the same time he must contend that the commerce of this kingdom was more dependent on England than the commerce of England upon Ireland. He would consider this part of the subject in three points of view; first, our commerce with foreign nations, in which we were totally free; secondly, our colonial commerce, which was a boon from Great Britain; thirdly, our channel trade with Great Britain, which was regulated between the two countries on principles highly advantageous to Ireland.

What was the state of our foreign commerce? On an average of three years of peace previous to 1793,—our exports to foreign nations were 357,324l.—our imports 943,187l. so that there was a balance

a balance against us of 485,863*l.* per annum. In the average of three years of war to 1797, our exports to foreign nations amounted in value to 239,796*l.* and our imports to 783,535*l.* so that the balance against us was 498,739*l.* a year.

With regard to our colonial trade, which Ireland enjoys not of right, but of favour from Great Britain, and upon the same regulations as British subjects, our average exports to the British colonies for three years of peace ending 1793, amounted in value to 622,034*l.*, our imports to 465,271*l.*—of course we had an annual balance in our favour of 156,763*l.*—Again, in the three years of war, to 1797, our average exports to the colonies were 708,846*l.*, and our imports 388,272*l.*—which, consequently gives a balance annually in our favour of 320,574*l.*

But what are the circumstances of the channel trade? The total value of the exports, generally from this country to Great Britain is 5,612,689*l.*, and the total value of all British exports to Ireland, is 3,554,845*l.*—which gives a balance in our favour of 2,056,844*l.*—Again, the yearly value of Irish manufacture imported into England is, 5,510,825*l.* while the value of English manufacture exported annually

annually to Ireland is only 2,087,672l., consequently the balance in our favour, upon the actual produce and manufacture of the countries is 3,425,153l.

His Lordship next called the attention of the House to the regulations of the tariffs between the two countries—every one of which was highly favourable to Ireland. He observed that on the whole of the imports into Great Britain from Ireland, valued as he had already stated at 5,612,689l. per annum, Great Britain only raises a revenue of 47,562l. whereas Ireland on the imports from Great Britain—amounting to 3,554,845l. raises a large revenue of 648,138l. per annum; besides receiving from Great Britain, duty free, the important articles of hops, coal, tan, and bark.

His Lordship further observed, that the trade of Great Britain with Ireland, forms only 1-9th of the gross commerce of Great Britain, whereas the trade of Ireland with Great Britain forms about 9-10ths of the gross commerce of Ireland. The imports from Ireland form about 1-8th of the whole imports into Great Britain, and the customs raised on them form not the 130th part of the customs of Great Britain. Again, in our trade
with

with foreign nations, we incur a loss of little less than 500,000*l.* per annum, while we gain on our trade with the British colonies, near 400,000*l.* and on our trade with Great Britain, 2,056,844*l.* On the whole then, if England lost her trade with Ireland, she would lose only 1-9th of her trade. But if Ireland lost her trade with Great Britain, she would lose 9-10ths of her trade.

Lord Castlereagh next adverted to the assertion of the Speaker, that if Great Britain denied her market to Ireland, she could resort to the colonies of other countries, and could find vent for her manufactures in Spain, in Portugal, and the East Indies. To these assertions he would not oppose any arguments of his own, but would read to the Committee the arguments of the Right Hon. Gentleman himself in 1785, which contained a fuller refutation, and came with higher authority than any statement he could produce.

“The Honourable Gentleman” (meaning Mr. Flood) “seems, with others, to undervalue
“the British markets for our linens, and that
“if Britain shall discourage her import, they will
“find vent elsewhere. I will not pay him so ful-
“some a compliment as to say he understands com-
“merce, his genius soars perhaps above such reading;
“but

“but if he did understand it, I would ask him,
 “where would he expect a market to favour the
 “linens of Ireland? Where will he find a market
 “under Heaven for that manufacture, which now
 “brings two millions annually into the kingdom?
 “Will Portugal take them? Will Spain take them?
 “Will France take them? No; we know they
 “will not. Will Russia, Germany, or Holland
 “take them? They are your powerful rivals, and
 “able to undersell you. Where then will you find a
 “market, if England shuts her ports? Will you go
 “to the West Indies? You cannot go to the English
 “colonies; they will be like Britain, there you can
 “have no admittance.—The French, Spanish, and
 “Portuguese have shut their ports long since, your
 “only market then is in the BANKRUPT States of
 “North America, that have not money to pay their
 “just debts, and many provinces of which, if they
 “had the money, have not perhaps the honesty to
 “do it.

“This bankrupt country is to give you the mar-
 “ket Britain affords. No, no; cherish the market
 “you have, you will never get so good; she ever
 “exports with bounty for you. And here let me ob-
 “serve the benefits of exporting, duty free, all our
 “fabrics through her ports, which this settlement
 “secures. You found the way for your linens to

“ foreign places through her ports, by her capitals
 “ and extent of dealing; do not refuse the like for
 “ your other fabrics—the prosperity of the linens
 “ should teach you.”

His Lordship having remarked on the force of this quotation, next called the attention of the Committee to the Speaker's general representations that this country was not dependent on its connection with Great Britain for our linen trade, and that the lowering of the duties which existed in the trade between the two kingdoms would not be beneficial to Ireland. On the first point he read the following extract :

“ The Hon. Gentleman complains of the report of
 “ the English Privy Councils, which say that to put
 “ Ireland and England on a footing of exact recipro-
 “ city as to linens, Ireland ought to give a bounty on
 “ the exportation of English linens, because England
 “ gives a bounty on the exportation of Irish linens.
 “ Can any thing be more just? Yet England makes
 “ no such demand, but is ready by this adjustment
 “ to give additional security to our linen trade for
 “ ever. If indeed the adjustment were to take away
 “ the benefits from Ireland, it would be a good cause
 “ for rejecting it; but as it for ever confirms all the
 “ advantages

“ advantages we derive from our linen trade, and
 “ binds England from making any law that can be
 “ injurious to it; surely Gentlemen that regard that
 “ trade, and whose fortunes and rent depend on its
 “ prosperity, will not entertain a moment’s doubt
 “ about embracing the offer.”

As to the point of lowering duties he, quoted the
 Speaker’s opinion, expressed in 1785, in the fol-
 lowing terms;

“ Were a man to look for the country most ad-
 “ vantageous to settle manufactures in, what would be
 “ his choice? One where labour and provisions are
 “ cheap, that is Ireland; and what he would next look
 “ for?—why to have a rich, extended and steady
 “ market near him, which England, stretched along-
 “ side affords, and to establish that market for this
 “ country is one great object of this system. Gentle-
 “ men undervalue the reduction of British duties on
 “ our manufactures; I agree with them it may not
 “ operate soon, but we are to look forward in a final
 “ settlement, and it is impossible but that in time,
 “ with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper
 “ food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to
 “ them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished
 “ by final settlement, and trade take its natural and

“ steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to
 “ rivalry; each will make that fabric which it can
 “ do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot
 “ make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly
 “ employed to profit, not diverted by duties, boun-
 “ ties, jealousies or legislative interference from its
 “ natural and beneficial course; this system will attain
 “ its real object, consolidating the strength of the re-
 “ maining parts of the Empire, by encouraging the
 “ communications of their market among themselves,
 “ with preference to every part against all strangers.”

Having shortly commented upon these extracts,
 by which he conceived the Speaker to be self-confu-
 ted, his Lordship next adverted to what the Speaker
 had asserted as to the linen trade. He stated that
 on an average of seven years, the number of yards
 exported were,

To Great Britain	-	35,648,706
To the British colonies	-	1,259,868
	Total	36,998,574
To foreign countries	-	4,762,084
	Total	41,760,658

He stated the value of linen exported to England
 for 7 years, taking in cambric and linen yarn, and
 estimating

estimating Irish linen at 1s. 10d. per yard, which is higher than the custom valuation, but nearer the truth it amounted to 3,153,868l. He then shewed the advantage which we derived by the British duties of 37 per cent. on foreign linens, and the sacrifice which Great Britain made to give us the advantage of her markets. The value of Irish linens consumed in Great Britain for 7 years, at 1s. 10d. per yard, was 3,038,630l.—A duty of 37 per cent. in this sum would amount to 1,124,293l. so that the people of Great Britain, in one view of the subject, pay dearer for their linens than they need, by upwards of one million sterling a year, or, in another view of the subject, suffer duties of one million a year to be imposed on their own people, which would otherwise be raised on the manufactures of Ireland. Or if the Irish manufacture could not come into competition, under such a duty with the foreign fabrick, it would be raised on the foreign to the exclusion of the Irish linens. But were Irish linens subject to the same duty as foreign linens, viz. 37l. per cent. they would be totally excluded from the British market. The quantity now furnished by Ireland would be supplied from abroad, from which Great Britain would levy a duty of 1,124,293l. which she now loses by the favour shewn to Irish linens in admitting them duty free to her market. That this would be the case appears clearly from the fact that

16,000,000

16,000,000 yards of foreign linen found their way into Great Britain in the course of the last year, notwithstanding the heavy duty to which they were liable, which proves that our linen could in no degree enter into a competition with foreign linen in the British market, and that we owe the command which we have of that market to the liberality of Great Britain, a liberality which she extends to us at the expence of above a million sterling a year; or in other words, we owe it to the bounty of the British Parliament, and not to the support of the Irish Legislature.

But it was said that the linen manufacture was to be encouraged by Great Britain, on a compact that Ireland should relinquish the woollen trade. The value of English woollens imported by Ireland was for three years ending 1793, 599,350*l*. The value of the average for three years to 1796, was 674,000*l*. At the same period the value of our linens exported to Gt. Britain was above 3,000,000*l*.; and was that a compact on the justice or equity of which any reasonable man would rely, when the actual loss to Great Britain on linens was nearly double the total value of the woollens imported into Ireland? He said it was curious to hear the arguments of the Right Hon. Gentleman as to woollens and fuel. First, he says we never can have an extensive

tenfive woollen trade, although he states that we had an extensive trade in woollens about 100 years ago ; then he argues the result of our want of fuel, yet he states that we are not dependent on England, though England supplies us with fuel duty free. In answer to the argument of the Speaker that no English capital had arrived in consequence of our free trade, his Lordship stated that this was attributable to the nature of our separate legislatures and the danger of separation ; but that as soon as there was one government and one law for the whole empire, British capital would naturally circulate in every part, when the means for employing and the security for improving it became general. He greatly lamented one part of the speech of the Right Hon. Gentleman, in which he alluded to the possible separation of the two countries, and the possibility of Ireland existing at least commercially, if not politically, without Great Britain. The Right Hon. Gentleman had ever professed himself a friend to the connexion of the two countries ; it seemed to be inconsistent with all his former conduct, and was calculated to create impressions which might have an effect he could never intend. But one of the great arguments of the Speaker was, that the Union would diminish the securities for the bounties on agriculture ; what was the obvious answer to such an insinuation,

ation, but that the terms of the Union might render it impossible? but if the subject were to be left open, might not a time arise when a discontinuance of bounties throughout the Empire generally would be a benefit? and if the arrangement of them were left to an Imperial Legislature, could the Hon. Gentleman assert it would not be safe in their discretion? or would he contend that the legislature of any empire could have an interest to impoverish one part of its dominions for the aggrandisement of another? Was it not a dereliction of sense and a prostitution of talents to advance such an argument? Another leading argument had been relied upon, that no Union could give security that it would not be infringed; and the income tax had been tortured into a proof that the terms of the Scotch Union had been violated. The feebleness of this argument had been long exposed. The malt tax in Scotland had also been adduced as an instance; but so soon as it was examined, this instance was found untenable. But now the income tax was brought forward, and in order to apply it to the present purpose it was stated to be a land tax, and consequently a breach of the articles of an Union. This however was notoriously not the case; It was made an express article of Union that Scotland should be subjected to the general taxes of the empire. How, therefore, a tax upon general in-

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come could be twisted into a fresh and increased land tax, he could not conceive ; it was no more a tax upon land, than a tax upon any article of consumption which was purchased by the income arising out of land, was a tax upon land. But the security of the Scotch Union did not rest upon the construction of any little article, it rested upon the security of a greater principle : it rested upon this security, that no Minister, no Parliament would be guilty of such madness as for any paltry consideration of profit or taxation to risque the happiness and connexion of the whole empire in a manner which would excite resistance and justify separation. He could have wished the Speaker had been silent respecting the competency of Parliament. He had seen some observations in the resolutions of the County of Louth, intimating a recurrence to first principles, which he could not too much reprobate, and had admired the discretion of the Right Hon. Gentleman in passing them without notice. He wished he had observed the same discretion now. He conceived the principle of the competency of parliament was defined by the right of parliament to consult in every case the good and the happiness of the people, and that no man could question its competency, who either knew or valued the constitution. But if ever such a principle as the incompetency of parliament should be set up, there were few cases to

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which it might not apply ; it would be used by every enemy to the constitution, and fall like a firebrand among the people. His Lordship said he would advert only to one argument more, which was, the imputation which had been made on those speeches which had stated our religious dissensions. It was uncandidly insinuated that the object of those speeches was to encrease our religious animosities. Their object was to shew that whilst Ireland adhered to a separate legislature, we could not act less on a principle of religious jealousy than we did ; but that if United, our parliament, with the legislature of Great Britain, could act upon a more liberal system of policy with entire security. His Lordship concluded by returning his thanks to the Committee for their attention, and saying that at so late an hour he would not detain them with further observations.



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